

Exhibit AP

Part 1 of 2

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Lifestyle

Can the Bennet brothers save the Establishment?

Michael is running for president. James is a top editor at the New York Times. Both are struggling to figure out their place in an altered landscape.



Left: Sen. Michael Bennet (Colo.), a Democratic presidential candidate, speaks to reporters in Sioux City, Iowa, after a campaign stop. (Scott Olson/Getty Images) Right: James Bennet poses for a portrait in October 2009, while serving as editor of the Atlantic magazine. He is now editorial page editor at the New York Times. (Susana Raab)

By **Ben Terris**

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For all the scandals, screw-ups and controversial hires, James Bennet's colleagues at the New York Times generally like working with him. James, who oversees the editorial page and is rumored to be a candidate to run the newsroom after Executive Editor Dean Baquet steps down, has a reputation for being intelligent, loyal and deft with a red pen. Still, earlier this year, he had a habit of picking up his cellphone and disappearing at the worst possible time — Friday evenings, when his team was closing the section. Was he talking to You-Know-Who?

"I'm 1,000 percent sure it was Michael," said one of James's co-workers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the boss.

Michael F. Bennet: the Democratic senator from Colorado, soon-to-be candidate for president and James's big brother.

When James was editor of the Atlantic magazine, the company changed its ethics guidelines to allow him to donate to his brother's Senate campaign. In addition to giving \$2,400 to both the primary and the general, he'd sit in on messaging phone calls, tweak speeches and occasionally travel to Denver. (However, he would not touch any of the magazine's coverage of the campaign).

About the series

An occasional series examining 2020 candidates through the prism of their most important relationships.

"How are you not going to let him give to his brother?" Atlantic Media Chairman David Bradley said.

This would never fly at the Times. And so months before Michael's May 2 announcement, James and one of his deputies headed to the office of A.G. Sulzberger, the recent inheritor of the Gray Lady, and said that if his brother were to run, then the opinion editor would agree to recuse himself from 2020 coverage.



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Sen. Michael Bennet (Colo.) greets Pat Fitzgerald during the Iowa Democrats' Passport to Victory event at Johnson's Supper Club in Elkader, Iowa. (Eileen Meslar/AP)

It would be tough to take himself off the biggest story in the country, but James supported his brother's (probably quixotic) quest because, in a way, they were on the same one.

You wouldn't know they were related by looking at them (James is bald, bearded and has expressive eyebrows; Michael has a head full of parted hair, and a clean shave that showcases a crooked smile). But they share a voice — deep and slow, almost a perfect parody of a rich person, as if they speak only while swirling a martini — and they use it to preach the same things: civility, bipartisanship and reasoned discourse.

The Bennets are the anti-Trump dynasty, institutionalists at a time when their very institutions — Capitol Hill, the mainstream media — have come under attack.



To their critics on the left, they are mealy-mouthed centrists, focused on giving a platform to “both sides,” for whom “civility” is just another cudgel used by elites to cling to power.

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To their critics on the left, they are mealy-mouthed centrists, focused on giving a platform to “both sides, for whom civility is just another cudgel used by elites to cling to power.

To their friends and supporters, they are what a politician and a newspaperman are supposed to look and act like, brothers in the mold of the Kennedys, idealists fighting for what’s right.

“Are they dinosaurs or are they the future?” their lifelong friend Eric Kolodner said. “I’m worried that it’s the former.”

Both Michael, 54, and James, 53, declined to comment for an article about their relationship. But at a lunch in 2017 with a group of journalists, Michael acknowledged that he and his brother were struggling to figure out their place in a newly altered landscape.

“We’re asking the same questions now,” he said. “What’s his role? What’s my role?”

He didn’t have the answer.



Michael Bennet speaks to his wife, Susan Daggett, just before being sworn in as the junior senator from Colorado on Capitol Hill in 2009. (Melina Mara/TWP)

The Bennet brothers and their younger sister, Holly, grew up in a tony neighborhood in Northwest Washington, blocks from St. Albans, the prep school both attended in the early 1980s. Their mother, Susanne, was the daughter of Jewish art dealers who had managed to get her out of the Warsaw ghetto in the 1940s and into Wellesley

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the prep school both attended in the early 1980s. Their mother, Susanne, was the daughter of Jewish art dealers who had managed to get her out of the Warsaw ghetto in the 1940s and into Wellesley College. Their father, Douglas, was an executive at an array of respectable institutions: the U.S. Agency for International Development, NPR.

Douglas was the boys' ultimate role model, and from him they learned the art of political discourse, acquired a love of sailing (when James was at the Atlantic, he once sold a boat to a friend, and according to a colleague, missed it so much that he would sit at his desk and watch it on a "marina-cam" live stream) and gleaned lessons about proper decorum in polite society.

"Dad's way was to instruct by barely perceptible guidance and demonstration. When he was teaching us to row, he would sit in the stern of the dinghy with his hand resting on his lap always pointing toward the goal, so that we could see, without turning our heads, when we were wandering from the right path," Michael said at a [memorial service](#) held in his father's honor earlier this year. "As in life, we could tell whether we were headed the right way just by keeping an eye on Dad."

When Douglas became the president of Wesleyan University in the mid-1990s, he tried to bring some of his lessons to campus by banning students from using chalk on the sidewalks — a decades-old tradition — because too many of their scrawlings didn't "[meet the civility test](#)."



Douglas J. Bennet, Michael and James's father, was president of Wesleyan University from 1995 to 2007. He was previously a federal policymaker, assistant secretary of state and president of NPR.

As St. Albans boys, his sons would pass any such test. The school prided itself on being a molders of Great Men. It demanded excellence, and James, a year younger and a class behind his brother, excelled under

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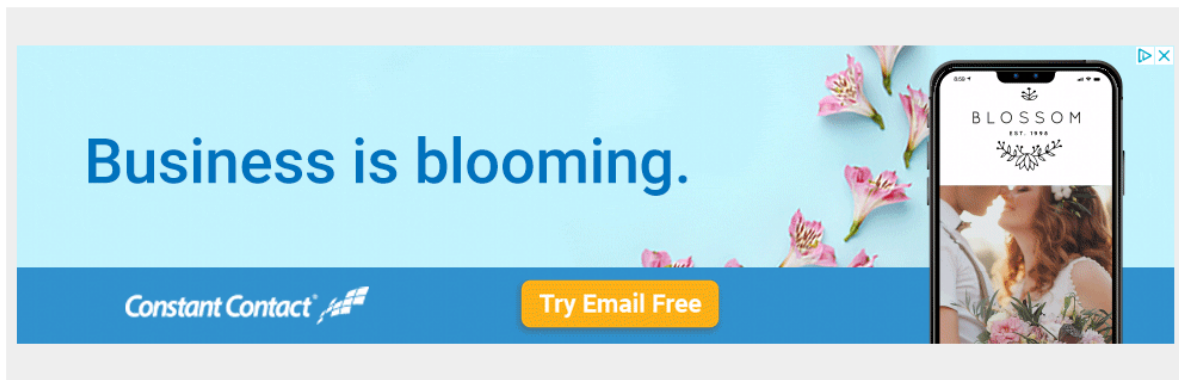


As St. Albans boys, his sons would pass on such traits. The school prided itself on being a molder of Great Men. It demanded excellence, and James, a year younger and a class behind his brother, excelled under these conditions. He played varsity baseball, ran the school paper, got top grades.

Michael, on the other hand, “hit his growth spurt late,” said John Schafer, a childhood friend.

Michael’s report cards were fine, but nothing to brag about. And as a little guy on campus, he was never afforded the social cachet that came with being good at sports. He had a goofy nickname of mysterious origin, Flobie, and was teased about the size of his ears.

“James was this fully-bloomed rose,” said Kolodner, a classmate who grew up next door, “and Michael was a plant that no one knew what was going to happen with.”



But Michael did have fight. It sometimes seemed like every neighborhood football game ended with him wrestling his brother into the mud.

And despite being a bit of a pipsqueak on campus, Michael seemed convinced that he was capable of extracting justice from an unjust world.

Schafer remembers a time he shoved Michael into a locker, demanding that he apologize for something (he forgets exactly what).

“He adamantly refused to do it,” Schafer said. “Instead, he’s in there just yelling about what he called ‘The One-Punch Theory.’”

All it would take, Michael hollered, was one strategically placed blow and he would be able to knock Schafer out.

Schafer listened to Michael rage, then quietly unlocked the locker and left to go watch a baseball game.

It's unclear how long Michael stayed in there begging for a fight. No one was left to listen.



In January 2009, Michael Bennet is sworn in as the junior senator from Colorado with his wife, Susan Daggett, and their daughters, Caroline, 9, left, Halina, 8, left, and Anne, 4, far right, being held by Vice President Joe Biden by his side. (Melina Mara/TWP)

Michael may have been a late bloomer, but he did bloom. He went to Wesleyan, his father's alma mater, followed by Yale Law School. He married fellow Yale alum Susan Daggett and headed out West — first making millions working for Philip Anschutz — a Colorado billionaire who got rich off investments in oil and railroads — and then, eventually, getting into politics.

He landed a job as Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper's chief of staff and later as a schools superintendent. His time turning around a failing school district earned him a reputation as a reformer and a profile in the *New Yorker* ([written](#) by Katherine Boo, a longtime friend of James), and in 2009 he was appointed to the U.S. Senate by Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter.

"I really still don't know why Ritter made such an unusual appointment," Bennet wrote in "The Accidental Senator," a chapter of his political memoir.

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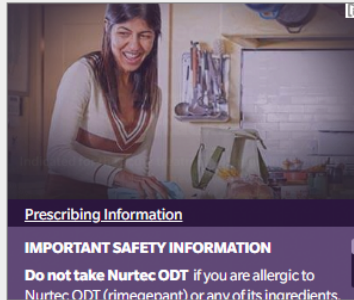
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appointment,” Bennet wrote in “The Accidental Senator,” a chapter of his political memoir.

He arrived with some hope of tackling the big issues facing the country in a bipartisan way, and instead joined one of the least-productive Senates in the nation’s history.

In a 2014 floor speech, the Senate chamber nearly empty, Michael offered a searing critique of his colleagues and the institution: “You can see this corruption in the difficult decisions we avoid. It’s the tough vote we don’t take, the bill we can’t pass even in the face of urgent need. It’s the deal that can’t be reached. It’s the speech that is never made.”



By this point, James was deep into a journalism career that was anything but accidental. He’d worked his way up through his first tour of the New York Times: metro desk, White House correspondent, Jerusalem bureau chief. Then David Bradley, who was searching for a new editor to run the Atlantic, came calling.

James wasn’t an obvious choice. Bradley said he was looking for a candidate with a nonpartisan streak, and James told him he’d never once voted Republican. But Bradley liked him anyway.

“It was like talking to a ‘Mr. Smith Goes to Washington’ character,” Bradley said. “You just know somebody had raised him to brilliant 1920s standards. And I don’t mean anti-woke, by the way, I mean integrity and honesty and virtue.”

James got the job in 2006 and hired an impressive and diverse set of writers, including Ta-Nehisi Coates, Andrew Sullivan and Matthew Yglesias. The magazine became known for publishing cover stories about big ideas: “[Why Women Still Can’t Have It All](#),” “[The Case for Reparations](#),” “[Is Google Making Us Stupid?](#)” Website traffic skyrocketed and the Atlantic returned to profitability.

The Bennets were reaching ever higher levels of success, and would joke, one of James’s former colleagues said, about which one of them would have the better headstone.